

REMARKS

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 1, 4, 7, 16, 25, and 30 will have been amended. In addition, claims 8, 9, 17, 18, 34, and 35 will have been canceled and the features recited therein having been incorporated into the respective independent claims.

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-35 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over DRISKELL et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,072,493) in view of O'NEAL et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,639,975). In view of the amendments to the claims to more distinctly recite their invention, Applicants respectfully traverse.

With respect to claims 1, 25, and 30, DRISKELL et al. appears to disclose a user interface for the display of billing-related information. However, DRISKELL et al. does not disclose processed billing information being presented to the customer via a graphical user interface (GUI) in which the GUI includes a billing screen including a plurality of columnized charges listed under respective column headings and arranged according to a type of charge, such that selection by the customer of a charge in a particular column causes a report to be displayed to the customer showing detailed charges that comprise the selected charge. In the present application, claims 1, 25, and 30 have now been amended to recite these features. Thus, DRISKELL et al. is submitted to be deficient with respect to amended claims 1, 25, and 30.

With respect to claim 4, DRISKELL et al. does not disclose a paper bill that

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includes an account summary including a hierarchy total column, a monthly charges column, a usage column, an other charges and credits column, a taxes and surcharges column, and a total column. DRISKELL et al. indicates that the billing information is encoded for distribution on cd-rom, diskette, electronic mail, optical disk, magnetic tape, and various other storage media (col. 9, lines 8-14). Further, DRISKELL et al. teaches away from providing a paper bill. That is, DRISKELL et al. indicates that the Bill Image feature of the billing analysis and management system allows a customer to browse or print all or selected portions of the billing information of an electronic bill and to do so in the same sequence as could be done with a paper format of the bill. The bill, or portions thereof, printed from the electronic bill is similar in format to the bill that the customer would have received in paper format directly from the service provider. (col. 27, lines 60-67). Further, even though O'NEAL et al. shows that a paper invoice may be provided (see Fig. 6), there would be no motivation to combine DRISKELL et al. and O'NEAL et al. Thus, DRISKELL et al. and O'NEAL et al., either alone or in any proper combination, are deficient in view of amended claim 4.

Further, claim 4 recites that the bill includes an account summary including a hierarchy total column, a monthly charges column, a usage column, an other charges and credits column, a taxes and surcharges column, and a total column. Neither DRISKELL et al. nor O'NEAL et al. disclose the columns recited in claim 4. Thus, DRISKELL et al.

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and O'NEAL et al., either alone or in any proper combination, are deficient in view of amended claim 4.

Regarding claims 7, 16, and 30, DRISKELL et al. does not disclose the feature of updating information (i.e., assignments, definitions, indication) in the hierarchy using Java drag and drop operations, which is now recited in amended claims 7, 16, and 30. In fact, DRISKELL et al. does not appear to use drag and drop operations, much less Java drag and drop operations, but appears to support selecting and entering text (see Fig. 17).

Further, Applicants disagree with the Examiner's assertion of inherency (regarding claims 34 and 35, now incorporated into claims 7, and 16, respectively, and into claim 30) with respect to enabling a representative of the customer to check out the hierarchy, at which time the hierarchy is available to other representatives of the customer on a read only basis. When referring to Fig. 14, DRISKELL et al. indicates that the hierarchy setup screen display may be used to remove elements for a particular level, to change elements in a level, etc. (col. 30, lines 54-57). Yet, DRISKELL et al. fails to disclose that the hierarchy may be checked out, much less making it available to others on a read only basis during the time that the hierarchy is checked out.

Although DRISKELL et al. mentions modifying security access of users (col. 28, line 66 et seq.) as pointed out by the Examiner, this in no way equates to making a hierarchy available on a read only basis when the hierarchy is checked out. DRISKELL

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et al. makes no mention of checking out the hierarchy, much less making it available to others on a read only basis during the time that the hierarchy is checked out. In this regard, the Examiner is requested to reconsider his position, or in the alternative, produce documentary evidence supporting the Examiner's assertion of inherency. Referring to MPEP § 2112 (IV), the Examiner must provide rationale or evidence tending to show inherency. "In relying upon the theory of inherency, the examiner must provide a basis in fact and/or technical reasoning to reasonably support the determination that the allegedly inherent characteristic necessarily flows from the teachings of the applied prior art." *Ex parte Levy*, 17 USPQ2d 1461, 1464 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1990) (emphasis in original).

In addition, DRISKELL et al. does not disclose a feature in which a representative, having checked out the hierarchy, is prompted to check in the hierarchy, as is now recited in claims 7, 17, and 30. Thus, DRISKELL et al. is deficient with respect to amended claims 7, 16, and 30 for several reasons, as discussed.

Applicants have not acquiesced in the propriety of the Examiner's rejections, but have amended the claims solely in order to expedite prosecution. Applicants have also canceled claims 8, 9, 17, 18, 34, and 35 and have incorporated the features recited therein into respective independent claims.

Applicants note that the amendments made to the claims herein add no prohibited new matter. Support for the amendments may be found, for example, at paragraphs 0026,

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0032, 0034-0035, 0037, 0041, 0054, 0059, 0062-0063, 0075, and 0079-0084, and in Figs. 5, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 21. Applicants note that the foregoing exemplary list of paragraphs and figures may not be an exhaustive list for which support for the amendments may be found.

Applicants further assert that dependent claims 2-3, 5-6, 10-15, 19-24, 26-29, and 31-33 are allowable over the applied prior art, at least because each depends, directly or indirectly, from allowable independent claims 1, 4, 7, 16, 25, or 30, as well as for additional reasons relating to their own recitations. Accordingly, for each of these reasons, and certainly for all of these reasons, DRISKELL et al. and O'NEAL et al. are believed to provide an inadequate and insufficient basis for the rejection of any of the claims in the present application. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims in the present application are clearly patentable over the references cited by the Examiner and an indication to such effect is respectfully requested, in due course.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections of the claims, as well as an indication of the allowability of each of the claims in view of the herein-contained remarks.

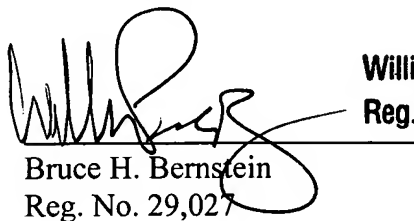
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully request an indication to that effect. Applicants have amended the claims and have argued the allowability of the claims. Accordingly, reconsideration of the outstanding Official Action and allowance of the present application and all the recited claims are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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